



January 2002

# The Bay Leaf

California Native Plant Society • East Bay Chapter • Alameda & Contra Costa Counties

## Calendar of Events

**Wednesday, January 2**

Chapter Board meeting, home of Joe Willingham, 2512 Etna St. Berkeley, 7:30 p.m.

**Saturdays, January 5, February 2**

Native Plant Restoration Team, p. 3

**Tuesdays, January 8, 15, 22, 29**

Plant Sale, p. 3

**Wednesday, January 23**

Membership Meeting, see below

**Saturday January 26**

Field Trip to Huckleberry Regional Park, p. 3

## Membership Meeting

**Please Note Location: Garden Room, Orinda Library  
(directions below)**

**Speaker: Carol Witham**

### The Ecology and Conservation of Vernal Pools

From the cracked mud and seemingly barren plains comes an eruption of color on the alluvial terraces of the eastern edge of the Great Valley of California and the surrounding lower foothills. Rainbows of color bloom in a succession of concentric rings around drying vernal pools—small, rain-filled depressions above an impermeable layer of clay hardpan or volcanic material that prevents the water from percolating. Vernal pools support a flora and fauna found nowhere else on the face of this planet. The extremes of summer drought and inundation during the rainy season are hostile to the invasive, non-native annual grasses and weeds that now surround the pools, providing a haven for the native wildflowers within the pools. Because the pools are fish- and predator-free, they are also home to a unique fauna of small crustaceans and amphibians that weather the summer heat and drought as eggs and cysts lying dormant in the soil. Vernal pools were once widespread in the Central Valley, as were the wildflowers that characterize these unique habitats; 75 to 90 percent of the state's vernal pools are now gone.

Carol Witham, one of the state's authorities on vernal pools, will present a slide show on the distribution,

ecology, unique flowers, and other organisms of vernal pools. Her photo tour includes pools from around the state and from a variety of geomorphic settings, including some of the finest remaining examples of vernal pools in California. She will also discuss threats to the continued existence of our vernal pools: those of eastern Merced County are severely threatened by the proposed University of California Merced campus, those of Mather Field in Sacramento County are threatened by gravel mining.

Carol Witham, editor of *Ecology, Conservation, and Management of Vernal Pool Ecosystems*, is a life member of CNPS who is active with the Sacramento Valley Chapter as well as several statewide committees. She works throughout northern California and Nevada as a botanical and biological consultant and has specialized in rare plants and vernal pools for 15 years.

East Bay CNPS membership meetings are free and open to everyone. This month's meeting will take place in the Garden Room of the Orinda Public Library at 24 Orinda Way (in Orinda Village). The Garden Room is on the second floor of the building, accessible by stairs or an elevator. The Garden Room will open at 7:00 p.m. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served after the meeting. CNPS books and other publications will be on display and available for purchase. Contact Sue Rosenthal, [rosacalifornica@earthlink.net](mailto:rosacalifornica@earthlink.net) or, call 510-496-6016 if you have any questions.

*continued on page 2*

**Directions to Orinda Public Library, 24 Orinda Way:**

From the west, take Highway 24 to the Orinda/Moraga exit. Turn left on Camino Pablo (toward Orinda Village), right on Santa Maria Way (the signal after the BART station and freeway entrance), and left on Orinda Way. From the east, take Highway 24 to the Orinda exit. Follow the ramp to Orinda Village. Turn right on Santa Maria Way (the first signal) and left on Orinda Way. Go one short block on Orinda Way to the parking lot on the southeast side of the new 2-story building on your right. There is additional free parking beneath the building as well as on the street. From BART (4 blocks): from the Orinda station, turn right and cross a pedestrian bridge, then cross a second pedestrian bridge on the left. Go one short block on the sidewalk to the third pedestrian bridge. Go two more blocks on Orinda Way to the Orinda Library.

**Upcoming Programs**

February 27, 2002:	Rosemary Donlon: Death Valley Niño Wildflower Year of the Century
March 27, 2002:	Steve Lowens: Lilies and Friends; the Genus <i>Calochortus</i> in California and the Greater U.S.
April 24, 2002:	Tom Bruns: Mycorrhizal interactions with native plants
May 22, 2002:	Deborah Rogers: Biological Expedition to Guadalupe and Cedros Islands

**(Past) President's Message January 2002**

One of the pleasures I've had while serving as East Bay CNPS chapter president has been that of representing CNPS at a recently established Environmental Roundtable hosted by the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD). The regular meetings have provided an excellent forum not simply for airing concerns and networking with local representatives of other environmental groups, but also for developing constructive plans to incorporate our various conservation goals within park management. There have obviously been significant differences of opinion and priorities, even among the environmental groups, but overall I have been impressed with the willingness to listen that has been demonstrated and the sincere efforts by all parties to work together towards achievable goals.

At the top of the current list of those goals is the proposed "Parks 2002" Ballot Measure K, scheduled for the March 5, 2002 elections (for details see [www.ebparks.org](http://www.ebparks.org) or [www.yesforparks.com](http://www.yesforparks.com)). At a cost of merely \$1 per month per single family home, the EBRPD will be able to

address four major needs for which sufficient funds do not otherwise exist: environmental maintenance, public safety, resource protection/restoration, and public access. "Parks 2002" does not target new acquisitions; rather, the goal is to provide maintenance for and improved access to existing parklands, including those acquired with the successful passage of Measure AA in 1988. Of course, the environmental groups will also share the goal of renewing Measure AA for additional acquisitions, once the time for that comes.

Of particular interest to the environmental groups is that over 30% of "Parks 2002" funds will be directed to natural resource goals (as compared to, say, simple trail construction or picnic areas). A significant chunk will go to the preparation of environmental documents and plans that properly address the impacts of large-scale park management activities, particularly grazing and vegetation management required for fire hazard reduction. Although there is some debate as to whether grazing and vegetation management for fire reduction per se properly qualify as "natural resource goals," we support the funds needed to pursue mandated activities in an environmentally sensitive manner. An analysis of environmental impact is an essential first step. CNPS has long advocated this approach, so we are delighted to see that environmental planning will receive significant funding from "Parks 2002." Other natural resource goals include control of invasive non-natives (primarily star thistle), improvements to rare species habitat, and protection of riparian corridors.

Of course, all of this is moot if "Parks 2002" does not pass. Before the EBRD decided to proceed with the measure, the agency commissioned an extensive poll to evaluate its acceptability to East Bay voters. Support fell right at the two-thirds level needed for approval, so it is extremely important that we not take the measure's passage for granted.

In addition to getting out and voting as individuals next March, I encourage all CNPS members to do what they can to raise awareness and support of this measure within their local community. We want to ensure that the East Bay Regional Parks District has the operational funding needed to manage the rich biodiversity of our East Bay parklands in an environmentally sound manner.

Finally, it is with some sadness that I write this as my last President's Message. I therefore take the opportunity to thank chapter board members who served with me during the past two years. Some are providing continuity, while others have turned their roles over to fresh faces. To all of you, and to all chapter members: thank you so much for your support, enthusiasm, and hard work! It's been great!

*Barbara Ertter*

## Plant Sale Activities

### Propagation and Potting Sessions

Tuesdays

January 8, 15, 22, 29

9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Merritt College  
Landscape Horticulture



Rain does not cancel.

Time is running out to purchase plants remaining from the October sale. Among the plants available are:

Coffeeberry	Sage
Silktassel	Soap plant
Currant	Oregon grape
Snowberry	Cedar
Manzanita	Cypress
Ceanothus	etc.

Come up to Merritt, browse, and buy during January's Tuesday mornings.

One last sale date for the season: **Saturday, February 2, 9:00-noon.**

That morning special **discounts of 30-50%** will be in effect.

For information call (925) 376-4095.

*Plant Sale Committee*

## Field trip to Huckleberry Regional Park

Saturday January 26 at 10:00 a.m. Charli Danielsen will lead a field trip to see manzanitas in flower, possibly coast leatherwood (*Dirca occidentalis*), and other early flowering plants. Meet at the parking area just off Skyline Boulevard in Oakland.

Directions: From the north, take the Thornhill Drive exit from 13 and follow Mountain Boulevard south until you reach Snake Road. Take a left onto Snake Road, and all the way up to Skyline. Left on Skyline, and then look for the signs to the parking lot on the right about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile north. From the south, exit from 13 at the Park Boulevard exit, go north on Mountain Boulevard and then right on Snake Road and follow through as outlined above.

*Janet Gawthrop*

## Help Wanted

Do you live in Contra Costa County? Do you have any connections with the media? Do you have a desire to have a significant impact on behalf of native plants? If you answer yes to any of these questions, our East Bay Chapter needs you. Our chapter does so much good work, we need to get the word out to more people and perhaps get more help on our up and coming projects, many of them in the Contra Costa/Southern Alameda areas. You would not be responsible for creating general content of what to publicize, so much as actually getting the word out. Interested, even just a little? Please call me at 925-372-0687 or email elainejx@mindspring.com.

*Elaine Jackson*

## Native Here Nursery

The nursery will be open as usual on Fridays from 9 to noon, and Saturdays from 10 to 1, weather permitting. January is still not too late for planting to take advantage of winter rains. There are still plenty of grasses from a variety of locations. There are nice *Physocarpus capitatus* from Oakland. Volunteers are always welcome to join in whenever the nursery is open. No need to call first, just show up and we'll put you to work.

*Charli Danielsen*

## Native Plant Restoration Team

We got rained out on Dec. 1 in El Cerrito. It was quite a storm.

Join us on Saturday, January 5. Meet before the work party to see Bob Case speak on invasive plants in the East Bay at the Wayne Roderick Lecture Series at the East Bay Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Tilden Park. The lecture starts at 10:30 a.m.; we will rally afterwards in the parking lot (approx. 12:30 p.m.) and drive to Canyon School for our annual Canyon work party. There are loads of native plants, including indigenous redwood groves. Come on down! If you are not coming to the lecture, meet at Canyon School at 1 p.m. or a little later.

To Canyon School: From Skyline Boulevard in Oakland, take Pinehurst Road all the way down into Canyon; pass the Post Office, and the school is immediately on your left. Bring water, a raincoat just in case, gloves and a favorite gardening tool (we have gloves and tools to lend as well). Heavy rain cancels; call 840-9367 on Saturday morning for a recorded message if it is raining and you are wondering.

*continued on page 4*

## Native Plant Restoration Team, *cont. from page 3*

Saturday, February 2: 10 a.m. at the Skyline Serpentinite Prairie in the EBRPD's Redwood Regional Park, in Oakland. We will be pulling French broom, jubata (pampas) grass and assorted other invaders of this fabulously rich spot. Thanks to Dee Rosario, Park Supervisor, for having us.

Noah Booker

## Activities of Others

The **Natural Heritage Institute** is looking for volunteers to help identify native plant protection and restoration opportunities for dune, tidal wetland, and riparian habitats in the lower Marsh Creek watershed (Antioch, Oakley and Brentwood). They are also currently developing native plant lists and would like input from local experts. Please contact Jim Robins of the Natural Heritage Institute at 510-644-2900 x11 or [jrobins@n-h-i.org](mailto:jrobins@n-h-i.org).

## East Bay Regional Parks Botanic Garden

January 5: **Bob Case**—The noxious weed invasion in the East Bay  
January 12: **Katherine Greenberg**—Spanish gardens and their influence on the gardens of California  
January 19: **Steve Edwards**—Material culture of the California Indians  
January 26: **Dick O'Donnell**—Another year of exploration on the Oat Hill Mine Trail, Napa County  
February 2: **Ed Rustvold**—Pursuing Liliaceae in California and Oregon  
February 9: **Mike Vasey**—Exploring Montara Mountain in San Mateo County  
February 16: **Alan Kaplan**—The new kingdoms of life

## Who's In a Name?

White tidy-tips (white layia), *Layia glandulosa* (Hook.) Hook. & Arn. (Asteraceae)

The 1820s and 1830s saw several plant explorers come to California seeking plants as yet unknown to science; among the more famous were Johann Eschscholtz, David Douglas, and Thomas Nuttall. Very few collectors had come before, so it was nearly virgin territory. Most collections were "worked up" by botanists back home, such as Sir William Hooker, Professor of Botany at the University of Glasgow and, later (1842), Director of Kew Gardens near London. The Eastern Sierra hosts many plants bearing the names of these early 19th century collectors and/or back-home botanists. For example, there are nearly 150 associated with Hooker.

One lesser-known collector of the 1820s was George Tradescant Lay, naturalist on the English sailing ship *Blossom*, under the command of Captain Frederick Beechey. The *Blossom* left England in 1825, returning in 1828, on a voyage of exploration, and also to support another English party which was searching for the fabled Northwest Passage. For over two years the crew criss-crossed the now violently stormy, now aggravatingly placid, Pacific Ocean, at times tracing the paths of the ships of exploration commanded by Captains Vancouver and Cook some 35 to 60 years previously. The *Blossom* also followed part of the path of the *Bounty*, whose crew so infamously mutinied in 1789 against that strict disciplinarian, Captain Bligh. Lay, and others on the *Blossom*, collected extensively on South Pacific islands, Hawaii, Kamchatka, Alaska, California (gathering 175 plant species there), China, Mexico, and South America. A famous flora by Hooker, "The Botany of Captain Beechey's Voyage", appeared in the years after the *Blossom*'s return.

Hooker proposed the genus name *Layia* in honor of Lay, whom he credited as one of the discoverers of a plant now called *Layia gaillardioides*. (In a rare lapse, he also gave the genus name *Layia* to a legume Lay collected in China, an error later corrected.) The Eastern Sierra *Layia*, *L. glandulosa*, was first collected by the great Scottish plant explorer David Douglas while on the "plains of the Columbia", at about the time the *Blossom* was visiting California; it was named by Hooker in the "California Supplement" to his work on the Beechey materials.

All early 19th century plant collectors who visited California, like most long distance travelers of the time, experienced the dangers and privations of the sea, something most of us can only appreciate vicariously, through books or movies. Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* brilliantly describes a long voyage, from Boston around "the Horn" to California and back in the mid 1830s. The 1935 movie "Mutiny on the Bounty" graphically portrays life at sea in those times. It was fortunate for Lay and others on the *Blossom* that, although they faced the perils meted out by Nature to all seamen in the frail ships of the time, the gentlemanly Capt. Beechey was no grumpy Capt. Bligh! His delightful journal of the voyage of the *Blossom* is a joy to read. He tells us about the "natural productions" (the plants, mainly) found at each of their many stops, and the different kinds of people encountered - South Sea Islanders, Bounty mutiny descendants (and a sole survivor) on Pitcairn Island, Eskimos, and mission Padres in California, among others.

Little is known of the life of Lay (born ?, died 1841). His middle name is the surname of the John Tradescants,

*continued on page 6*

## Board of Directors

### Elected Officers

**President:**

Barbara Ertter, 1859 Catalina Ave., Berkeley 94707, h/526-4592, w/643-0600

**Vice President, Administration:**

Tony Morosco, 2329 7<sup>th</sup> St., Berkeley 94710, 549-2238, w/642-8468

**Treasurer:**

Holly Forbes, 7128 Blake St., El Cerrito 94530, 234-2913, w/643-8040

**Secretaries:**

Recording:  
Michele Lee, 2923 Sheldon Dr., Richmond 94803, 243-1265

Corresponding:  
Joanne Kerbavaz, Calif. State Parks, 250 Executive Park Blvd., Suite 4900, San Francisco 94134, w/415-330-6323

### Advisors

**Members at large:**

John Game, 1155 Spruce St., Berkeley 94707, 527-7855  
Jim Sharp, 2663 LeConte Ave., Berkeley 94709, 644-9344  
Joe Willingham, 2512 Etna St., Berkeley 94704, 841-4681

### Bay Leaf Editors

Brett Boltz, 2210 Spaulding Ave., Berkeley 94703, h/549-3327, w/643-0448, bboltz@uclink2.berkeley.edu  
Joe Willingham, 2512 Etna St., Berkeley 94704, 841-4681, pepe@dnai.com

**Recorded Chapter Information: 464-4977**

**CNPS Home Page:** <http://www.cnps.org>

**East Bay Chapter CNPS Home Page:**  
<http://www.ebcnps.org>

**Chapter CNPS-EB-Alerts E-mail List:**

Find out more; email to [listserv@usobi.org](mailto:listserv@usobi.org) with:  
**INFO CNPS-EB Alerts**

All area codes are 510 unless noted

## Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to affiliate with:

East Bay Chapter (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership category:**

- Student, Retired, Limited income, \$20
- Individual, Library, \$35
- Household, Family, or Group, \$45
- Supporting, \$75
- Plant lover, \$100
- Benefactor, \$500
- Life, \$1000

Mail application and check to: California Native Plant Society, 1722 J Street, Suite 17, Sacramento CA 95814

father and son (1570-1638, 1608-1662), famous plantsmen of their age - royal gardeners, horticulturists and plant explorers. Based on Lay's middle name, it's plausible to suppose that his family was involved in some way with botany, but nothing appears to be known now of his life before he joined the crew of the *Blossom*. A few years after the return of the *Blossom*, Lay was back in China, not as a naturalist but as a missionary, sent out by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Shortly before his death he published a book entitled *The Chinese as They Are: Their Moral, Social and Literary Character*.

The 1935 version of "Mutiny on the Bounty" features a portrayal of the famous 18th century English botanist Sir Joseph Banks, who was largely responsible for sending the *Bounty* to Tahiti. I'd recommend viewing it some winter day, while waiting for those first white tidy-tips to appear next spring.

This article by Larry Blakeley appeared in the newsletter of the Bristlecone chapter, CNPS, November, 2000/Vol. 20, No.6) Visit <http://www.csupomona.edu/~larryblakely/whoname/> for notes and more articles on botanists for whom plants are named.



Dried Stock Pond in Briones Regional Park  
Tony Morosco © 2001

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East Bay Chapter  
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